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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004378

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PNAT](#) [KCOR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CHALABI PLAN FOR ELECTIONS

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. One of Ahmad Chalabi's senior advisors indicated to PolOffs willingness to form an alliance with Ayad Allawi to form one liberal, moderate, centrist coalition. If an agreement cannot be reached before the coalition registration deadline -- and we doubt an agreement would be possible -- Nabil Mousawi anticipates Chalabi would seek his own moderate coalition that will include Sunnis. Mousawi does not expect, however, that a Chalabi coalition can rival an all Shia Islamist list. If the all-Shia Islamist list re-emerges, Chalabi would likely rejoin it. End Summary.

Possible Allawi/Chalabi Deal

12. (C) Transitional National Assembly (TNA) member and senior official in the Iraqi National Congress (INC) Nabil Hasan Ahmad Mousawi met with PolOffs on October 23 to discuss Ahmad Chalabi's plans for the national elections. Mousawi explained that the best chance for moderates to win the election is to have one large, moderate and liberal coalition - a coalition that included both Allawi and Chalabi. Mousawi claimed that Chalabi's circle consists of four advisors - Chalabi's eldest brother Jawad in London, Aras (NFI) in Baghdad, American contractor Francis Brooke and Mousawi. He claimed that Chalabi's advisors have been urging Chalabi to broker a deal with Allawi because they see it as the moderates' best chance of winning. Mousawi, however, described the relationship between Allawi and Chalabi as difficult. They have known each other since the age of two, and Mousawi added that they are related on several levels and tend to kill each other with "politeness."

13. (C) Mousawi admitted that neither Allawi nor Chalabi are perfect. He added that Allawi is tainted by his circle of advisors and Chalabi is tainted by hints of corruption. Both men have problems following through with commitments and any alliance between the two would result in Allawi taking the top position and Chalabi the second. Mousawi said that Chalabi has remained a relative mystery to PolOffs in Baghdad because he still feels the sting of what happened during the CPA days. Chalabi sometimes listens to longtime friends and colleagues, but is more swayed by analytical arguments than personal appeals.

14. (C) In response to PolOff's query, Mousawi did not deny that Chalabi is the source of information leaked on corruption in the ministries to the press. Chalabi's intent was not to defame Allawi, he said, but to clear out those who are fully guilty of the charges. Mousawi commented on how angry Chalabi got when UK Ambassador Patey last week urged him to cease and desist. Mousawi added that Chalabi considered the UK Ambassador's request a veiled threat.

15. (C) If an Allawi/Chalabi deal does not materialize, Mousawi expects the INC to establish its own liberal and moderate coalition by the IECI coalition October 28 registration deadline. He was insistent that the party would include moderate Sunnis and added that he has been negotiating with members of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP). He said that INC was also in negotiations with Fadeela Party's Nadeem al-Jabiri, Shia Independent Qassim Daoud, Monarchist Faisal Qaraogholi and moderate Dawa members. Mousawi reported that there is a serious split between Dawa and Jaafari and added that everyone knows Jaafari has been clandestinely setting up his own offices in the governorates to run separately. (Comment: that would be news to us, and a surprise given Jaafari's general approach to management. End Comment.)

16. (C) Mousawi added that there would be need to recruit Kurdish parties for the coalition. In his view, most Shia consider Jalal Talabani a 'good guy whom we all like.' Mousawi doubted that anyone would really object if Talabani kept his position as President.

17. (C) Mousawi lamented that the 7-day extension for coalition registration could result in an all Shia list. He added that several entities want to re-construct Sistani's 169 list. Mousawi said if this happens, the INC would be compelled to rejoin because it has Sistani's seal of approval.

Prediction about Iraq's Iranian future

18. (C) Mousawi told PolOffs that most people do not understand that the upcoming national election is the only opportunity for a moderate and centrist government to take hold. He warned if Shia Islamists win the election, they would have four years to consolidate power and break the Iraqi moderates movement. With the Islamists in power, Mousawi predicts that SCIRI leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim will return to Najaf to pursue his religious career leaving Badr Corps head Hadi al-Amari in his stead as head of SCIRI's political arm, allowing a shadow Iranian government to reign.

19. (C) On a personal note, Mousawi told PolOffs that he will not enter the upcoming elections. He added that his experience as a TNA member did not suit him. Mousawi said he would prefer to be an executive working behind the scenes for a politician. He also plans to spend more time with his 3 children in London.

Comment

19. (C) We find it a hard to imagine a Chalabi-Allawi electoral alliance since Chalabi himself is spurring on the hounds investigating corruption that are causing Allawi advisors to squirm. Allawi is moving ahead on his election coalition (septel) and Chalabi is trying to calculate the best angles. We found it particularly interesting that Mousawi thought Chalabi would rejoin a Shia Islamist unity list if that list appears coming to fruition again.

Satterfield